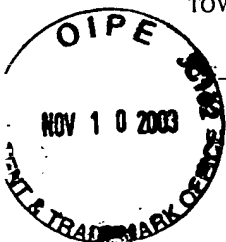


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Gene Welles



PATENT
Attorney Docket No. 16683-1-2

#33
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1/20/04

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re RCE of:

GERALD BLATT

Application No. 09/289,000

Filed: February 25, 1997

For: JOINT TREATING METHOD

Customer No. 20350

Confirmation No. 8112

Examiner: P. Prebilic

Technology Center/Art Unit: 3738

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

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November 7, 2003

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Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

This Preliminary Amendment accompanies applicant's RCE that is being filed following the decision by the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences dated September 26, 2003.

Prior to examination of the above-referenced application, please enter the following amendments and remarks:

Amendments to the Claims are reflected in the listing of claims, which begins on page 2 of this paper.

Remarks/Arguments begin on page 7 of this paper.